

**Twelve Lessons**

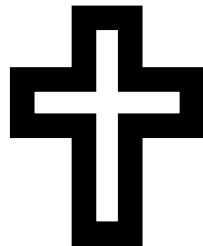
*on*

***The Tabernacle***

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE TABERNACLE – LESSON 1

**Introduction:** The word “tabernacle” simply means “a tent, or covering.” The Tabernacle was a temporary place “set apart” for the presence of Jehovah. In Exodus 25:8 God states “*Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.*” So we see the immediate purpose of the Tabernacle was to provide a dwelling place for the presence of God while Israel journeyed from Egypt into Canaan.

The Tabernacle was primarily a place for worship. However, a closer study reveals a world of symbolic or typical truth, and this will be our approach. The best way to study the Bible is given in I Corinthians 2:13, “*Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; **comparing spiritual things with spiritual.***” We will compare many aspects of the Old Testament Tabernacle with New Testament truths. We will begin by introducing the purpose and plan of the Tabernacle.

### Lesson Goals:

1. To study the divine purpose of the Tabernacle in relation to the nation of Israel, understanding the necessity of its construction and the effect of its ministry.
2. To illustrate the Tabernacle’s preeminence in Jewish religious life.
3. To introduce the typology of the Tabernacle, revealing the picture it portrays of the Lord Jesus Christ and His ministry in redeeming all of mankind.

### Definitions of Important Terms and/or Phrases:

1. Tabernacle – A tent or covering; a temporary dwelling place
2. Shekinah – The manifestation of the Divine presence; the glory or brilliance of God often represented in Scripture by a thunderous cloud, burning fire, or brilliant light.
3. Warrant – A voucher; that which attests or proves.

## I. THE PURPOSE OF THE TABERNACLE

### A. Witness Of God’s Person

- 1. Revealing His Grace** – The tabernacle was man’s only way of approaching a holy and righteous God. It was God appearing to man in grace, and man approaching God in faith. God was not obligated in any way to establish relations with man. It was a provision of His mercy.
- 2. Revealing His Greatness** – The colors of the tent reveal the deity and power of God. The strength of its structure, and value of the materials all represented God as the omnipotent ruler of Israel and the world. These will be studied in greater detail later.
- 3. Revealing His Glory** – This was the dwelling place of the shekinah glory of God. The dark cloud revealed to Israel His beautiful glory, a witness of His presence.

### B. Worship Of God’s Presence

- 1. His Presence Would Guide** – The Bible states in Ex. 40:33-34, “*So Moses finished the work..... Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.*” From that day on, the shekinah glory of God allowed Israel to know that God would be with them wherever they would go. There was a cloud by day and the fire by night. Read Exodus 40:36. Israel knew it was time to move when the cloud was taken up.
- 2. His Presence Would Guard** – The Israelites took comfort in the fact that God had made a commitment to take care of His people. As long as the shekinah glory was in the camp, victory was sure! The cloud and the fire followed them throughout all their journeys. Read Exodus 40:38. It gave the nation confidence in overcoming their trouble.

### C. Warrant Of God’s Purpose

#### 1. Confirmation of a Redeemer

- a. The Tabernacle stood as an object lesson to the Israelites for nearly five centuries.
- b. Every detail of its structure and content pointed to the coming of their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- c. Every instruction given by God to Moses revealed to the Jew that God had not forgotten His promise of a coming Messiah.
- d. Every time a Jewish person looked at that structure, he was reminded that his redemption would one day be complete.
- e. In John 1:14 we read, “*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt (tabernacled) among us.*” The Tabernacle was an actual visible dwelling place of God. Colossians 2:9 states, “*For in him dwelleth*

*all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”*

## **2. Commencement of a Relationship**

- a. These Jews had been living in an environment of idolatry for more than 400 years. God established the Tabernacle to be a place of true worship that is pure and holy.
- b. He established that worship on the foundation of a blood sacrifice. Once the blood had been applied, God was able to live in their midst. He had a place of “habitation” because of the blood.
- c. We as believers now have a relationship based on the blood, and are “...built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” (Ephesians 2:22)

## **II. THE POSITION OF THE TABERNACLE**

### **A. A Place That Had Prominence**

1. Central to the lives of the Jews. The tent was situated in the midst of the whole congregation of Israel symbolizing its importance to their existence. Also this position reveals the necessity of having the presence of God in the midst of our lives.
2. Israel knew the importance of following the commandment of God concerning the location of His dwelling place. God wanted to be preeminent in their lives, the center of their attention. Such is the message of Colossians concerning the life of the believer. Our lives should orbit around the Son in our hearts. Christ is to be preeminent.
3. God is a jealous God. He states “*Thou shall have no other gods before me!*” There should never be anything closer to us than the presence of God.

### **B. A Practice That Took Precedence**

1. As soon as the cloud was removed from the Tabernacle the nation packed up and began to move. They knew the importance of staying in the will of God.
2. The first step in relocating was making sure God’s dwelling place would be coming along. After the Jews found their new location, their first desire was to see the cloud of God’s glory return into their midst. What an important lesson for the believer. Make the presence of God in your life a first priority. Without it there is no peace, protection, purity, or power.

## **III. THE PLAN OF THE TABERNACLE**

### **A. The Provider Of The Plan**

1. The plan was given to Moses directly from God himself. Evidently God revealed to Moses the structure of the heavenly Tabernacle because Exodus 25:9 states, “*According to all that I shew thee...*”
2. God was the one who took the initiative to reunite Himself with mankind. Moses didn’t go looking or asking God for a plan. God already had purposed in his heart the plan that would provide salvation and protection for His people. All He asked of the recipients is that they be obedient to His will. If you go by God’s blueprints, you are guaranteed a relationship with Him.

### **B. The Pattern Of The Plan**

1. God showed Moses the exact place of worship located in heaven. Everything inside of the earthly Tabernacle was an exact replica of those pieces in the heavenly Tabernacle.
2. This fact brings us to a wealth of information concerning our own salvation. If there is a Tabernacle in heaven there must be blood, a priest, presence of God, ark of the covenant, and all the elements of the earthly tabernacle. These are all associated with our salvation, and by studying the purposes for the table of shewbread, the laver, the burnt altar, and etc. in the Old Testament we can uncover glorious truths concerning our personal tabernacle (body) of God. “*What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost...*” (I Cor. 6:19)
3. Examples Of The Pattern
  - a. One Gate – Jesus Christ The Only Way
  - b. Altar Of Burnt Offerings – The Cross – Place Of Sacrifice
  - c. Laver – The Word Of God – Used for cleansing
  - d. The Candlestick – The Spirit Of God – Illuminating truth
  - e. Table of Shewbread – Fellowship with fellow believers
  - f. Altar Of Incense – Prayers of Intercession
  - g. The Veil – Separation of Humanity and Deity – Done away with by Christ
  - h. The Mercy Seat & Ark of the Covenant – The Throne Of God – Can only approach with the blood.
4. The Importance Of Hebrews – The book of Hebrews connects the rituals of the O.T. Tabernacle with the practical living of the believer. It also explains the work of Jesus Christ as our High Priest.